TWO PIERROT PLAYS

THE DREAM STONE
THE DREAM GATE

ERIC LYALL

MIDLOTHIAN EDUCATION COMMITTEE

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TWO PIERROT PLAYS

BY ERIC LYALL.
2nd Lieut Highland Light Infantry

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THE DREAM STONE: THE DREAM GATE | 1918

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TO

MY MOTHER

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The first of these plays was written, produced, and published in the Poetry Review (to the courtesy of whose proprietors I am indebted for permission to reprint it) before the war broke out. The completion of the second beguiled what would otherwise have been tedious hours in hospital, when I came home from the Dardanelles, and the correction of the proofs has been a pleasant task on my return from the Western Front.

But I can scarcely expect these details to interest the reader, on whom indeed I should not inflict them were it not that the plays themselves bear no other evidence of being, in any sense, "war work."

E. L.

September, 1917.

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THE DREAM STONE

A Pierrot Play in One Act

First produced at the Lyceum Theatre, Edinburgh, on June 19, 1914, by Mr. Esme Percy, with the following cast:

Pierrot . . .	Mr. Esme Percy
The Mayor . .	Mr. William Muir
The Mayor's Daughter .	Miss Gabrielle Paul

The music was specially composed by Denis F. Capes

A SONG THAT WAS SUNG TO PIERROT

Come with us, come with us, Pierrot,
Come while there's youth in your heart,
For it's only the young in heart can go
Where the daisies cover the fields like snow,
And the Sun goes down in a crimson glow,
Pierrot, Pierrot, come!

The world is full of riches and gold,—
Better than these are our gifts!
For its joy is dead and its heart is cold,
And the love it knows is bought and sold,
And it is too weary to smile, I'm told,
Come with us, Pierrot, come!

The rising moon and the stars are bright,
(Ah, Moon of our golden dreams),
And the waves are dancing in silver light.
Oh why is your face so sad and white,
Forget to-morrow, be gay to-night,
Pierrot, Pierrot, come!

Where only the young in heart can go
Come with us, come with us, Pierrot!

THE DREAM STONE

Characters:

PIERROT

THE MAYOR

THE MAYOR'S DAUGHTER

The first milestone on the high road outside a Northern manufacturing town. A hedge of hawthorn and wild briar across the scene closes off the road from the fields beyond, which stretch away to a wood. Several large trees stand on the far side of the hedge. The sun is setting, and the sky is a crimson glow which very gradually gives way to a darkness with stars. Voices are heard singing as from the wood:

"Into the land where the dreams all go,
Come with us, come with us, Pierrot."

PIERROT *sits on the milestone (which is marked* WESTPORT, 1 MILE) *in a brown*

study. Presently there is a sound of puffing and blowing, and a portly, breathless figure comes into sight—a man of fifty, rather bald, and of a high colour—slightly apoplectic indeed. There is no trace of romance—"no nonsense," as he would put it—about him. He is the MAYOR *of Westport. As he comes within shouting distance he addresses* PIERROT.

MAYOR. [*puffing and fanning himself with his bandana handkerchief*] Hi, you there! is your name Pierrot?

PIERROT. [*waking up with a start*] Pierrot, yes that's what I'm called.

MAYOR. [*coming up to him*] Pierrot, *alias* rogue and vagabond, eh? Well, see here, my man, I will have no rogues and vagabonds here, at least not while *I* am Mayor of Westport, so——

PIERROT. Are you Mayor of Westport?

It must be very difficult to be a Mayor. I am glad to meet you, sir.

MAYOR. Not so fast, my man. I am come on a serious errand—so serious that I come myself to deliver you this letter.

PIERROT. It must be a very serious errand—but there, I didn't think you were joking. These letters in long envelopes always *are* serious, aren't they? I wonder why they are called foolscap—is it because——

MAYOR. Open your letter, sir—speak afterwards, if you have anything to say.

PIERROT. I don't like to break the pretty golden picture on the back. Besides, I know what the letter says.

MAYOR. You *know?*

PIERROT. Yes, I have some others just like it. At half-a-dozen of the last towns we've visited they've given me one. Your letter says something like this—oh, in much finer language, of course: "We, the Mayor and Aldermen of the Borough of Westport, sitting in council, do hereby order and enact that Pierrot and his troupe of mummers do immediately and at once leave the precincts and bounds of the said borough without giving any further performance therein; failing which, he and they will be dealt with under"—a long name of an Act of Parliament. Then it says: "Given under our hand and seal," and there's a picture like the one on the envelope, only it's red. I never

know why they say "Given," but the letter in everyday language means, Begone, Pierrot!

MAYOR. That is the gist of the letter, my man, and it remains for you——

PIERROT. Won't you call me Pierrot? Everybody does, you know. It sounds so much more friendly.

MAYOR. Friendly! Do you think I have come to pay you an evening call? I have no desire to be friendly, sir. Quite the opposite, let me assure you. I have come personally to remonstrate——

PIERROT. Why have you come personally? In these days of the penny post——

MAYOR. I have come personally, and at some inconvenience, be-

cause you are the third of your kind who has visited our town within the month, and I am resolved that you shall be the last. I have come clothed, so to speak, in the authority of my office, to order you off, sir. Begone, Pierrot! Our sons shall spend their evenings more profitably than in listening to your plays; our daughters shall no longer be contaminated by your foolish frivolity. To-day I found my own girl gazing at a picture of you singing a song below a lady's window. I took it from her quickly enough, I tell you.

PIERROT. I look rather nice in that picture, don't you think? It has been much admired.

MAYOR. You are corrupting our town. I am told your performances

are nothing short of a scandal, yourselves are no better. Your name is a byword for loose living—your very dress is an outrage on respectability. The sooner we can rid the country of your presence the better. Begone, sir! you and your troupe.

PIERROT. I was just being gone when you called me, sir. I had got to the first milestone, you see. It's a very comfortable milestone—much nicer than the sharp kind they have on some roads. I congratulate you on your milestone, Mr. Mayor.

MAYOR. The milestones are erected by the County Authorities, not by the Corporation. What am I saying? I am not here to discuss municipal politics with you. Where is the rest of your troupe?

PIERROT. Columbine and Phrynette and Harl— Oh, but you don't know them, of course! The others, I mean, have gone even farther than I, and you think I go far enough, don't you? So do lots of people, of course. They say I've come all the way from Rome, even from Greece, but that's nonsense, you know.

MAYOR. I am not concerned with where you came from. You may have come from Spain. You may be Italian, or French, or even worse, for aught I know. I am charitable enough to hope that you are. But all I care for is that you should go away and that you never come here again.

PIERROT. I used to think, too, that there was only one thing of which

I could say "that's all I care for." But that was long ago. We grow wiser, sir, as we grow older. After a while we learn to say it and feel it of many things; then later—of nothing! But you, now, you haven't come to the nothing stage, have you? There's lots of things——

MAYOR. No, sir, I have not come to the nothing stage. I have reached my present position—one of respectability and a modest affluence, a position not without many cares and responsibilities, but also, I thank Providence, not without its rewards—by means of industry and honesty. I hold the esteem and the trust of my fellow townsmen who have elected me to be their civic head, and it is on their behalf

and with their approval that I order you from out our boundaries. Honesty and industry, sir, I would commend these qualities to you and to your fellows. They would seem to have escaped your notice so far. Give up your dissipated, pleasure-loving lives, turn over a new leaf——

PIERROT. Do you hear the wind? Listen! Laughter and sighs! It's rustling the leaves I've turned over and left behind me with such poor pictures as my heart can devise. Dissipated! I am hungry, I am starving!

MAYOR. Earn money. You are able-bodied and strong. Earn an honest livelihood and you will not starve.

PIERROT. All the money in the world can't buy what I want. It

can't buy what any of us *really* want. Look at your town, Mr. Mayor, it had almost fallen asleep, it had nearly reached the first dream, but now your lamplighters are wakening it up again. Perhaps it wanted to dream for a little. . . . We are such stuff as—oh, but that's out of one of our dissipated plays. See how each street is becoming a thread of lights that stretches out to meet—the dark. In all these streets there are hundreds of people, and up here you and I—all of us starving for something that money can't buy us. You can send me away, you can forbid me ever to come back—I'm only Pierrot; but they will remember. For a little while I made them forget they were hungry. Have you ever done that?

MAYOR. There is a large building on this side of the town [*pointing with his umbrella*]—no, not the brightly lit one, it's an hotel —that other on the left. There, in return for a certain amount of work a hungry man or woman can get not only food, but a night's shelter. For those who are unable to work we have our Poor Relief Laws. We don't teach people to forget that they are hungry—we feed 'em. Surely that is better!

PIERROT. The town is blinking its eyes —it looks up here and sees us and wonders. But it isn't the Mayor and Pierrot it sees. To it we are both—symbols.

MAYOR. I am no symbol, sir. Let me tell you——

PIERROT. Yes, you stand for success,

wealth, comfort, ease. You stand for—what d'you call it? —civic authority. You are law and order and respectability, and your place is secure enough —it's in the people's brain. They're working for the same things every day of their lives.

MAYOR. And what may you be a symbol of?

PIERROT. I am a symbol for Failure. All artists are that—even the greatest artist knows himself to be a failure—it's only so little he can tell you of the beautiful things he knows. And all dreamers and poets, and all lovers, are my Sisters and my Brothers. But mine isn't so cold a symbol as yours—my place is secure too—it's in the people's heart, and all the Mayors and all the Aldermen

in the world can't drive me out.

MAYOR. Make what you can of your place, then. I will not listen to you further, my man. We *can* and, depend upon it, we *shall* drive you out of this place, and there's an end of it. To-morrow, if any of you dare to show your faces, you will be arrested for the rogues and vagabonds you are.

PIERROT. To-morrow and to-morrow and to-morrow! Oh, I forgot—what were we talking of?

MAYOR. Silence! I have warned you. Begone, Pierrot!

He goes away, turning round, just as he disappears, to shout Begone!

A voice sings in the distance:

"Into the land where the dreams all go,
Come with us, come with us, Pierrot."

PIERROT *makes as if to join the singer, but thinks better of it, and again sinks into melancholy beside the milestone.*

A bird sings a few notes drowsily, and BLANCHE *enters—a young girl, very simple and dainty in every way. She is dressed in a quiet grey frock. The wistfulness in her eyes might speak of loneliness, were it not contradicted by her manner which is half shy, half eager. She is the* MAYOR'S *daughter.*

BLANCHE. Are you Mr. Pierrot ?

PIERROT. Pierrot is my name. It means "Little Peter." It's a nice name, isn't it ? What's yours ?

BLANCHE. Mine is Blanche.

PIERROT. Blanche! Yes, it's a nice name, too, it means "white," doesn't it ? But I shall call you Oisette. You won't find it in the dictionary 'cos I invented it this very moment, but it

means "little bird." Where have you flied from, Oisette?

BLANCHE. I came—I heard my father shouting at you. I'm afraid he has been rude to you. I'm sorry.

PIERROT. It doesn't matter, child. Was that gentleman your father? Never mind. You've made me forget what he said. You'll say nicer things, won't you? I always forget everything but the nice things—and the day before yesterday and the day after to-morrow. That's the best of having a good memory, you know—it teaches you to forget.

BLANCHE. What a funny memory that teaches you to forget. How can you remember the day after to-morrow?

PIERROT. Oh. it's easy. You see, it

won't happen for a long time, so you can make it happen just as you like and remember that. I'll make it happen like to-day.

BLANCHE. Why like to-day, Pierrot ?

PIERROT. Because you happened to-day. That was a pretty thing to say—did you like it ?

BLANCHE. You say such funny things, Pierrot. I hadn't ever seen a play before, but I saw you last night and you made me laugh and cry, and afterwards, when I went home, I didn't know whether I was happy or sad.

PIERROT. Then you were happy. You always know when you're sad.

BLANCHE. I loved your play. It was about the things I dream of—you must have dreamed them too. I haven't ever seen anyone like you, Pierrot.

PIERROT. There isn't anyone else like me, child.

BLANCHE. I wanted to see you again just to make sure you were real. You *are* real, aren't you ? They told me you had gone away. I'm glad I found you. I have a picture of you, but I'd remember without that. The picture is like you were last night when you were being sad—when the lady went away from the window, you know. You were being sad just now, Pierrot—why are you sad ?

PIERROT. I can tell you why I'm *not* sad any longer ; but you know that already. I'm only sad when I'm hungry.

BLANCHE. Are you hungry now ?

PIERROT. Only a little.

BLANCHE. I have some chocolates.

PIERROT. I'm not hungry for chocolates. I'm hungry—for love.

BLANCHE. For love? I don't know about love, Pierrot, except what I've read in books and what you told me in your play last night. It is a strange thing, isn't it? Tell me, is love sweet, or bitter?

PIERROT. Oh, it's sweet, it's sweeter even than you are, Oisette. It's the sweetest thing in all the world. It's like the song of the nightingales. It's like the breath of a rose—a white rose that turns pink when the sun rises. The birds sing of it, the trees whisper it, and the flowers—listen!—you can hear the wild rose dreaming of it.

BLANCHE. It's Autumn, Pierrot—the wild roses have all gone away.

PIERROT. Where love is, it is always Spring. The wild roses have gone to sleep only, child. They've drawn their curtains, that's all. They're dreaming, just as you are dreaming—if you dream hard enough you'll dream that you find them. And when you dream *that*, your dream will come true. [*A voice sings very far away.* PIERROT *and* OISETTE *stand hand in hand.*] The evening star has come out, and soon all its brothers and sisters will be singing with it. Do you know why they twinkle? It's that they are smiling, because of love. They're smiling to you, Oisette. Smile back to them. Blow them a kiss.

BLANCHE. [*dreamily*] A kiss to the stars.

PIERROT. Oh, ever so many more have come out. And look, child,

look—it's a flock of birds flying away to the sunshine. They're not tired, they won't ever be tired—love makes them strong. Shall we follow them, you and I? Shall we fly to the South where the sunshine is?

A voice sings nearer:

"Into the land where the dreams all go,
Come with us, come with us, Pierrot."

BLANCHE. Who spoke, Pierrot? Where is the land where the dreams all go?

PIERROT. There, where the sunset's a crimson glow.

[*Far away a clock chimes.*]

BLANCHE. [*returning with an effort to a more everyday manner*] Pierrot, it is late and it's getting cold, I must go home. You won't forget me? Good-bye.

PIERROT. No, child. Give me your

hands—I'll warm them. Poor dear little cold white hands. There! I'll give you a kiss, Oisette—O! your cheeks are rosy now. You're not cold any longer. Come with me. We will find you a dress and you shall be Pierrette.

BLANCHE. I shall be Pierrette. [*She turns and looks down on the town.*] Good-bye, my dear ones.

PIERROT. You will soon forget.

BLANCHE. Take me with you, Pierrot. I *am* Pierrette. Oh, I want to come—I must come. See [*she lifts her skirt daintily with both hands, showing a white petticoat with broad black ribbons round it tied in large bows at the side*] I am just like you underneath—white and black. They needn't find me another dress—this shall be my dress.

I'm just like them really, am I not, Pierrot dear—just like the pretty ladies you act with.

PIERROT. [*hesitatingly*] No, Oisette. They are not like you—there's no one in all the world like you. Columbine was once . . . that was yesterday, I forget.

BLANCHE. But I shall learn to be like them. Oh, I can learn things easily, and you shall teach me, Pierrot.

PIERROT. [*quickly*] You? No, no! I'll teach you a better thing than that. We will go away together far from here, you and I by ourselves. We'll leave them behind us, and we'll fly away after the swallows, little bird, and find a nest in the sunshine, and I will teach you love.

BLANCHE. I had forgotten about love.

Is it the best thing of all? Is it love perhaps that is calling to me? You see, I know so little, but I'm beginning to understand. Did *you* tell me? Is it love I have been waiting for ever since I was little, ever since I played with my dolls? Oh, Pierrot [*clapping her hands in quite childish glee*] perhaps we'll find a baby!

PIERROT. [*troubled*] I had forgotten about babies, Oisette. I don't think anyone would like to be my baby. Once, long ago, I held a baby in my arms. It was little and soft and warm, and I thought it was nice, but when I spoke to it, it cried and cried; and even when I said the funniest things to it, it wouldn't laugh—it wouldn't even stop crying. So I gave it back to its mother. And now

I shall forget about babies again. She was very beautiful. . . .

BLANCHE. No, Pierrot; babies are the wonderfullest things in all the world. They're more wonderful than love even. They're sweet—they're sweeter even than love is. A baby is a dream come true. Pierrot, you will remember about babies again—the day after to-morrow. The next baby you hold in your arms won't cry—it will smile to you when you say your funny things—it will smile its way into your heart, Pierrot dear, and you will love it, for it will be ours—yours and mine. Now shall we go, just you and I alone?

PIERROT. Without a dream that I can call my own. [*With an effort.*] Oisette, little bird, I was wrong

about love. I told you about it as I dream it, not as I find it. The love I told you of is the love that is waiting for you. Some day—the day after to-morrow—oh, I just know you will find it. It will be real—the day after to-morrow. You must remember it, and forget to-day that isn't real at all. For the love that I know of, it's not sweet—it's bitter. It's the bitterest, saddest, cruellest thing in all the world. It's more bitter than saying Good-bye. It's sadder than a new grave in the springtime. It's crueller even than the world is. Oisette, I can't teach you love—not the sweet love that is for you, little bird. What I could teach you would hurt, and I wouldn't ever hurt you.

BLANCHE. You won't hurt me, and no

one else ever can—because there will be just you and I in all the world, Pierrot, until we find our baby.

PIERROT. You shivered there—you're cold. But winter hasn't come yet. These clothes of ours—they're meant for sunshine weather, but we haven't any others to wear when the sunshine goes away. What do you make babies' clothes out of—not out of this ?

BLANCHE. Oh, Pierrot, you're so funny! Babies' clothes are made out of the dreams of their mothers ; love is the thread they're sewed with, and each little button is a wish. They're tied with sky-blue ribbon because that is the colour of a baby's eyes. It's love that keeps a baby warm.

PIERROT. Love can't keep out the cold,

Oisette—not love alone. Love needs clever fingers and a clever head to help him when the wind blows and the snow comes. And even now the wind is coming—soon it will be on its way over the high hills that will wrap themselves in their snow hoods. Whew-ew-ew! the wind that has kissed the snow, the wind that is cold. Oisette, the moon is rising—it's nearly over the trees. Do you know what moon it is? They call it the Harvest Moon, but really it's the Moon of Dreams.

BLANCHE. The moon of our dreams.

PIERROT. It's the weaver of dreams—it weaves our little dreams into one great dream—that's why it grows bigger and more golden as the nights run past, until it is the biggest dream of all; then

that dream is made true, and it begins all over again. Oisette, you are asleep, the stars are singing.

BLANCHE. Far, far away the fairy bells are ringing.

PIERROT. The world's asleep, Oisette, and you and I have met each other in our dreams. We won't forget.

BLANCHE. Only our dreams are true, I think, Pierrot.

PIERROT. We dream our dreams, and then, alas! they go—ah, no, yours is the dream that will come true, little bird.

BLANCHE. The biggest dream of all—the golden moon.

PIERROT. Little bird, you are too tired to sing—you're dreaming in your little cosy nest. Across the

world you and I are talking to each other in our sleep. To-morrow—why, to-morrow you will waken and I shall come. Only you won't call me Pierrot any more. Good-night, little bird. Remember the day after to-morrow—the day when Love comes true. See, I give you a dream kiss, Oisette — oh, quickly! the moon is sailing into the clouds, our dreams are changing. The stars will sing another dream to you—safe to the little nest where you lie sleeping, the stars will guide your dreaming heart again. Saint Peter and the children's Saint will watch over you. Good-bye, my little bird!

Slowly and dreamily and as if walking in her sleep OISETTE *goes off.* PIERROT *stands dumbly gazing after her, then follows*

for a step or two, with arms wistfully outstretched. The voices sing again:

"Into the land where the dreams all go,
Come with us, come with us, Pierrot."

PIERROT *turns back and falls in a heap, clasping the milestone in his empty arms.*

[*The curtain falls slowly.*]

THE DREAM GATE

A Pierrot Play in One Act

"*Only the song of a secret bird.*"

SWINBURNE.

A SONG SOME FAIRIES SANG

Over the hills and far away
Lies the land where the fairies play,
And they are so light that they can fly
Over the hills and the mountains high.

Over the hills and far away
The sun is setting (but here it's day),
The fairies dance in a magic ring
And if you are quiet you can hear them sing—

"Over the hills and far away"
(These are the words you hear them say)
"Over the hills in the land of dreams
"The roads are made of the pale moon beams.

"O! come to us and forget to weep,
"The dream road's short when the world's asleep,
"And the things you dream are far more true
"Than the things that really happen to you.

"And when you are safe in our Fairyland
"We'll touch your eyes, and you'll understand
"Why things that are happy and glad and gay
"Are over the hills and far away."

THE DREAM GATE

Characters:

SCARAMOUCHE

PIERROT

COLUMBINE

(The costumes of all three characters show considerable signs of wear but that of Columbine is not at all soiled.)

A road where it passes by a large garden on the outskirts of a town. The garden is separated from the road by a low stone wall surmounted by a delicately wrought iron railing. Behind the railing there is a thick holly hedge, but over the top of this there are branches of laburnum and lilac and May in blossom. The gate, made partly of iron and partly of beaten copper, is in the middle of the scene and three broad semi-circular stone steps lead up to it. On either side of it is a round stone pillar a

little higher than the railing, and the gate itself is exquisitely designed. It is in two parts which open separately. At present it is closed, but through the bars one has a glimpse of a very beautiful garden bright with spring flowers and many trees in blossom—would have, rather, if it were daylight. It is, however, an hour before sunrise on a morning of May and the light is only enough to see by in a vague way.

PIERROT *and* SCARAMOUCHE, *both very tired and dejected, enter.* PIERROT *carries a small wicker cage with three birds in it.*

SCARAMOUCHE, *in his customary black suit, carries Harlequin's wooden sword which has somehow come into his possession. They are walking very slowly.*

SCARAMOUCHE. It's no use as a walking stick. [*he flings the sword over the hedge.*] He won't want it any more—Harlequin—where he is. There's an end of wanting—with him. Wait long

enough and there's an end to everything, night and day—and nights and days too.

PIERROT. [*has walked on and seated himself on one of the stone steps, placing the cage beside him.*] Dreams have no end, Scaramouche, and there's never an end to love.

SCARAMOUCHE. Dreams! love!—it's the same thing; you're always harping on that one string, master. It's out of tune now, give it a rest. [*He sits down on the trunk of a tree.*]

PIERROT. Scaramouche, you are a materialist.

SCARAMOUCHE. I'm hungry. I haven't tasted food for hours.—I've never walked so many miles in my life. I'm footsore. It's I who should be calling you

names. You dragged me here. You spent our last shilling [*pointing to the cage*] on these sparrows. You always were a spendthrift, but why on earth you should want to buy *them*, I can't think. What if they were prisoners—all the money in the world wouldn't set all the prisoners free, and we haven't got all the money in the world. It was supper you went to buy—they wouldn't make a supper for a kitten.

PIERROT. You'd have done it yourself if you'd seen them as I did,—singing birds—they *sell* them, Scaramouche—think of it—they keep them in cages and sell them from one prison to another. They sing their songs even then, but their hearts are breaking—for the trees and the woods they love

[*he rises*] and the blue sky they can't even see—oh! Well, I've done that too—I've wanted the sun and the moon and the stars and had to content myself with the end of a candle. But I could buy *their* freedom for a shilling — because they're nightingales, and nightingales can't live long in a cage—Oh, horrible!

SCARAMOUCHE. Sentiment, that's what I call it; and when it costs you your supper—and mine. I could do with a plate of cold beef and pickles and a mug of beer. [*He smacks his lips.*]

PIERROT. [*standing at the gate.*] It won't open, Scaramouche; it's locked.

SCARAMOUCHE. Locked, is it? Why of course, they always are. They lock you in or they lock you

out—it's the same thing; and nobody spends their supper on your freedom.

PIERROT. Where does it lead to? What's beyond the trees?

SCARAMOUCHE. [*looks up but remains sitting*] Ah! wouldn't you like to know? "The orchard walls are high and hard to climb"—you need wings to find that out. [*pointing to cage*] What are you going to do with them?

PIERROT. [*turning slowly round from the gate*] I'm going to make their dreams come true—I'm going to open the door of their cage.

SCARAMOUCHE. Perhaps that's just locking them out. Well, make haste and let's get on—it can't be far to the town now. What a night!

PIERROT. It has almost stopped being night any more, Scaramouche. The stars are all fading out like little dreams. Soon it will be dawn—that's the big dream that chases all the little dreams away.

SCARAMOUCHE. I wish I could dream I wasn't hungry.

PIERROT. [*opens the cage door and takes out the first nightingale.*] Is it too late for you to sing—no, it mustn't be!—tell me it's not. The world is sad—it has forgotten how to smile even—but you are Joy. There! teach it happiness again. [*He holds the little bird to his heart for a moment then flings it into the air and it flies quickly away.*]

SCARAMOUCHE. You've flung away joy, spendthrift.

PIERROT. [*gazing at the trees where the bird has flown.*] It was only a small thing, Scaramouche, but it will grow. [*He takes the second bird out of the cage.*] Oh, you beautiful, you must go too and sing. The world has forgotten how to see all the beautiful things, even its dreams are troubled, it can't see the stars because it's asleep, or the sunrise because it isn't awake.

Above the faint singing of the birds can be heard the song of the first nightingale.

SCARAMOUCHE. It can't see the wood for the trees.

PIERROT. But you are Beauty—sing to it—teach it to remember loveliness. [*again he holds the bird to his heart and then sends it after the first.*]

SCARAMOUCHE. You've flung away beauty again, prodigal. It's only skin deep they say—that's how it goes.

PIERROT. Beauty lasts for ever, Scaramouche; you can't fling it away. Even the world can't destroy it—it can only forget it—the world that has grown so old and so wise that it forgets. We'll send it the best gift of all; little bird in your cage—you must go and teach the world to be young again—you are Youth [*he puts his hand in the cage and brings out the little body of the last bird—dead.*] Scaramouche, it's dead!

SCARAMOUCHE. Yes, I knew that would come sooner or later—it's been later with you, Pierrot. Song or supper, you have to choose quickly lest you get neither;

youth can't last for ever. Well, we can do without it. Look at me! Say good-bye to youth, Pierrot, and let's get on. It's nearly daybreak now, we must sing for our breakfast if we can't find it any other way. There, there! what's the use of crying over it all? When it's to-morrow we'll forget to-day.

PIERROT. Dead! You'll never sing any more. Perhaps you knew the sweetest song in all the world. No one will ever hear it now; or are you just asleep—are you singing somewhere in your dreams?

SCARAMOUCHE. At your dreams again! Are you coming, Pierrot, to find our breakfast?

PIERROT. No, Scaramouche—you must go without me. I am too tired and sad to want any

breakfast—you can have mine too when you find it.

SCARAMOUCHE. I call it morbid. Why, hundreds of them die every day and they're never missed. You can't weep for each of them. Come along, we'll get some breakfast somehow, that's what you want. Look, it's getting quite light.

PIERROT. No, Scaramouche—[*he is holding the little dead bird in his hands*].

SCARAMOUCHE. Oh well, have it your own way. I'm going—you can follow when hunger drives you—I'll wait for you—Good-bye, Pierrot!

PIERROT. I'll follow you—to-morrow. Good-bye, Scaramouche.

SCARAMOUCHE *limps off to find his break-*

fast. PIERROT *places the dead nightingale gently on the ground, picks up the cage, breaks all the walls of it down, and tosses them aside. He goes first to a sapling and then to an old tree under which he makes a tiny grave. Then lifting the little body with both hands he raises it almost reverently to his cheek for a moment, after which he buries it and fills up the grave with some handfuls of loose earth. The morning breeze sighs through the branches above, and a shower of white lilac petals falls gently.*

PIERROT *goes up to the gate and stands for a few moments with his face between the bars which he grasps with his hands. It has got much lighter, but the sun has not yet risen and the birds are still singing.*

PIERROT. [*turning round to listen to the last notes of an exquisite sweet song*]
Joy!
[*he comes down one step and the song is repeated*]
Beauty!

[*he comes down another step listening for the song again. There is only silence. He sinks down beside the little grave he has made, whispering*]

Youth!

[*he sits with his face between his hands*].

Gradually the singing of the birds becomes more drowsy until it is almost hushed. Then a chorus of sweet notes greets the rising of the sun, and, as the light of the new day fills all the garden, finally dies away and there is deep quiet.

PIERROT *does not move.*

But a more wonderful thing even than the song of the third nightingale happens. Through the bars of the gate COLUMBINE *is to be seen slowly coming down the garden path. She is dressed in her usual short, white frilly skirts; her face has grown very gentle and a little sad. When she reaches the gate she stands looking out, as* PIERROT, *a short time before, had looked in; presently*

she sees PIERROT *and her face lights up with a glad smile. She looks down on him for a moment, almost as if he were her child, and then speaks very softly.*

COLUMBINE. Pierrot! [*but* PIERROT *does not hear*] Pierrot! [PIERROT *looks up and glances round in all directions but that of the gate, then drops his head on his hands again*]
Pierrot! [PIERROT *rises, looks at the little grave, shakes his head sadly, then looks at the trees above him and finally at the gate. At first he cannot believe it is really* COLUMBINE. COLUMBINE *stretches out her hands to him through the bars of the gate.*]
Pierrot! [*now vaguely he knows it is true, and falling on his knees he takes her hand in his and raises it to his lips, bending low over it.*]

PIERROT. Columbine!

COLUMBINE. Pierrot, your cheeks are wet. Why do you weep, Pierrot ?

PIERROT. [*half to himself*] It is the song of Youth. . . . [*then answering her*] I dream it all so often, and always just before the end of my dream, your voice asks me that.

COLUMBINE. Is the dream sad ?

PIERROT. As sad as life. I look for you but I can't ever find you.

COLUMBINE. Is the end of the dream happy ?

PIERROT. The end of a dream is—not to awaken.

COLUMBINE. No ! Pierrot, the end of a dream, the beautiful end, is to awaken and find your dream become true. Look, dear, the dawn has come, it isn't

night any more, will you awaken? Dear dreaming heart, here is the end of dreams, here is our dream come true.

PIERROT. The end—or the beginning? [*realising the gate that separates them from each other*] Always these bars—even now.

COLUMBINE. It's a dear gate, Pierrot. It leads us to each other.

PIERROT. But now it keeps us apart.

COLUMBINE. Nothing can keep us apart any more.

PIERROT. It's locked. What can open it?

COLUMBINE. The dream that opens all doors—the truest dream of all—the dream of Love.

PIERROT. If I give you a kiss, Columbine,

perhaps it will be sorry—perhaps it will let us pass.

PIERROT *and* COLUMBINE *slowly kiss each other through the bars of the gate as if their kiss were part of a ritual. One half of the gate opens of its own accord.*

PIERROT. [*awed*] It is because we know its secret. [COLUMBINE *joins* PIERROT *and they stand on the steps hand in hand.*]

COLUMBINE. It's because it knows ours—it's because of Love.

The birds are singing again for it is long past sunrise.

PIERROT. I am awake at last, Columbine; Columbine—my dream, tell me it's true!

COLUMBINE. All beautiful dreams are true.

PIERROT. [*with tears in his voice*] Columbine——

COLUMBINE. Come and tell me, dear. [*she sits down on the steps and draws* PIERROT *to her*] Rest your head on my breast—there, that's better. Now what do you wish to tell me?

PIERROT. Columbine, I don't deserve your love. I have been faithless—often I have forgotten you—oh, for hours at a time. I was hungry for love, and sometimes—oh, I am ashamed—I thought I'd found it, but I didn't ever find it. I was looking for it always—I didn't know this would ever be.

COLUMBINE. You didn't really forget me. It was that you saw in each of the others something that spoke to you of me—until you remembered it wasn't quite the same. And your dreams, dear—they climbed up the ladder

of sleep to the stars and shined down on me. You couldn't, even if you would, give anybody else your heart, for I have kept it for you—here. They thought you, the world thought you, heartless. They didn't understand.

PIERROT. [*with a sort of whimsical pride*] I made them laugh. I made them cry. Then I made them forget the sad things and smile again. So they thought—it doesn't matter what they thought. Was the world kind to you, Columbine?

COLUMBINE. The world is too busy to be kind to us perhaps, Pierrot—it hasn't got time. I danced for them, I sang to them—old songs about when they were young. They listened for an hour, they smiled and were

pleased—I'm glad of that. Then they forgot. I used to wonder what it was that made them all so busy, and why the lovely things meant so little to them. I couldn't ever find that out. It must be something very important. I was hungry too, sometimes, and often very tired, but I listened to the song of the nightingales when I was too weary to sing, (it was they who told me where you were, Pierrot!) and the stars were our dreams when I couldn't sleep, and the sunrise brought me hope always. But I too forgot sometimes—the world thought me heartless too, Pierrot. Oh! worse than that—Light-o'-love they called me. But my heart was always yours, even long ago before I knew it myself, long, long before you knew it. You know it

now, don't you, Pierrot dear? But why didn't I tell you—why did I hide it from you?

PIERROT. [*raising his face on her breast*] You are always beautiful to me, Columbine. Always I loved you, but I didn't know how much until I lost you. And now I have found you again; perhaps you weren't ever very far away, perhaps you were always just on the other side of the gate that shut me out, the gate I couldn't open by myself. [*he sighs contentedly as a child might in his mother's arms*]. I think this is just the beginning of dreams, Columbine. [*he rises and stands looking through the gateway*]. Here is the land where dreams come true. Shall we go to our own country, Columbine?

He gives her his hands and raises her to

her feet, and they stand for a moment gazing deep in each other's eyes. The morning song of the birds is at its height. PIERROT *kisses* COLUMBINE *again and they both turn to the gate whose bars, caught by a ray of the risen sun, have turned all golden. In the garden a sweet voice sings :*

" In that dear land where our dreams are all true,
Columbine, Pierrot, we wait for you."

The other half of the gate swings slowly open. Hand in hand COLUMBINE *and* PIERROT *pass radiantly through the gate into their kingdom, and move slowly out of sight, leaving the gate wide open for all to enter. They have forgotten the things they have left behind.*

But only they who dream truly are able to follow them, for the gate is hard to find.

[*The curtain falls slowly.*]

EPILOGUE

But Pierrot is dead, they say,
And all his troupe; and Columbine's
Dear name is but a memory
In old-world gardens, where the day

Grows older very slowly, where the hours
Are full of quiet, sweet thoughts and dreams unbroken,
Murmurous with song of birds and gay with flowers,
And where the fairies live in rainbow bowers.

There Columbine is home again,
And there the shade of Pierrot,
Forgetting all his love's long pain,
Woos her—and this time not in vain.

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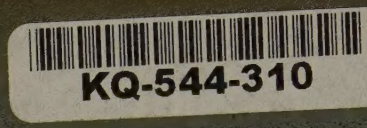
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